

Message Text

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4537

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1914

STADIS EXDIS////////////////////////////////////

EA/PRCM FOR ARMSTRONG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFSP CH

SUBJECT: USLO STAFFING

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE RESPONDS TO QUESTION RAISED DURING MY CONSULTATIONS LAST MONTH. WE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE A DECISION ON INCREASE IN USLO STAFFING MADE IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORK OF CONGEN HONG KONG AND USLO. IF THE DECISION WERE MADE TO TRANSFER MUCH OF HONG KONG'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS TO PEKING, SUCH A DECISION WOULD REQUIRE BEFOREHAND ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CHINESE FOR A LARGER BUILDING ON DIFFERENT PROPERTY AND ADDITIONAL STAFF HOUSING. HOWEVER, IF WE ARE TO EXPAND ON A PIECEMEAL BASIS IN OUR PRESENT LOCATION, WE COULD IMMEDIATELY USE ONE MORE POLITICAL OFFICER AND POSSIBLY, AFTER THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER IS ABSORBED, ANOTHER OFFICER IN THE ECONOMIC SECTION. FURTHER ALONG, WE COULD ADD YET ANOTHER ECON OFFICER AND PERHAPS A MILITARY ATTACHE. END SUMMARY

1. IN OUR TALK IN BILL BLEYSTEN'S OFFICE, YOU ASKED ME HOW WE MIGHT USE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL. WE HAVE GIVEN THIS SOME FURTHER THOUGHT AND OFFER THESE COMMENTS.

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2. YOU WILL NOT BE SURPRISED THAT WE FEEL THE QUESTION

OF HOW WE MIGHT USE ADDITIONAL STAFF HERE IS BEST CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE BROADER QUESTION OF HOW RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ALLOCATED BETWEEN USLO AND CONGEN HONG KONG. PIECEMEAL ADDITIONS TO USLO STAFF, SUCH AS THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER, CAN BE MADE INDEFINITELY AND, AND WE ALL KNOW, ANY BUREAUCRATIC OPERATION CAN SILENTLY AND ENDLESSLY ABSORB ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL, BUT WITH DIMINISHING RETURNS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT EVENTUALLY THE USG SHOULD GO THE ROUTE OF THE AUSTRALIANS AND CANADIANS AND DECIDE TO CENTER ITS FIELD COVERAGE OF THE PRC IN PEKING RATHER THAN HONG KONG. SUCH A DECISION WOULD MEAN, OF COURSE, VERY SUBSTANTIALLY BEEFING UP OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STAFF AND INEVITABLY, ALONG WITH IT, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT--PERHAPS DOUBLING OUR PRESENT COMPLEMENT; IT WOULD REQUIRE ALSO A COROLLARY DECISION TO APPROACH THE CHINESE FOR MORE STAFF HOUSING, A LARGER OFFICE BUILDING, AND THE LAND TO GO WITH IT. THIS SHOULD BE DONE AS A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE.

3. WHILE WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE USLO EXPANSION CARRIED OUT IN SUCH A CONTEXT, WE COULD, OF COURSE, PUT ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO WORK NOW WITHOUT CHANGING THE HONG KONG-PEKING BALANCE. GENERALLY, WE FEEL WE ARE CARRYING OUT INADEQUATELY CERTAIN FUNCTIONS FOR WHICH USLO IS UNIQUELY SITUATED. THIS INCLUDES PARTICULARLY TRAVEL OUTSIDE PEKING FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REPORTING AND COVERAGE OF PEKING EMBASSIES' CONTACTS WITH THE CHINESE. OUR PERFORMANCE HERE COULD BE IMPROVED BY ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL ON BOTH THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SIDES.

4. POLITICAL. WE COULD IMMEDIATELY USE AN ADDITIONAL POLITICAL OFFICER AT THE FSO-5 LEVEL. WE NOW ACTUALLY HAVE LESS MANPOWER WORKING ON POLITICAL MATTERS THEN WE DID A YEAR AGO. THIS IS A PRODUCT PRINCIPALLY OF THE FACTS THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME THE POLITICAL/CONSULAR POSITION IS DEVOTED INCREASINGLY TO THE CONSULAR SIDE AND THAT WE HAVE NOT PUT A SUBSTANTIVE OFFICER IN THE POSITION VACATED BY BRUNSON MCKINLEY, WHO PERFORMED A CONFIDENTIAL

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NUMBER OF POLITICAL CHORES NOW HANDLED BY THE POLITICAL SECTION. DISCOUNTING THE POLITICAL/CONSULAR OFFICER, ADDING AN O-5 WOULD MEAN A TOTAL OF FOUR POLITICAL OFFICERS. WE THINK THAT, UNDER THE PRESENT DIVISION OF LABOR WITH HONG KONG, YET ANOTHER POLITICAL OFFICER (A FIFTH) WOULD, UNLESS TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND BEYOND THE EXPECTED, RESULT IN EITHER UNDEREMPLOYMENT OR EXCESSIVE OVERLAPPING WITH HONG KONG'S FUNCTIONS.

5. MILITARY. SOME FREINDLY MISSIONS HERE HAVE FOUND THAT A POLITICALLY ORIENTED MILITARY ATTACHE, DESPITE THE LIMITATIONS ON HIS ACCESS, CAN ADD A USEFUL DIMENSION TO THE MISSION'S POLITICAL REPORTING AND ANALYSIS. WE RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT, FOR THE PRC AS WELL AS OURSELVES, THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR ASSIGNING AN ATTACHE TO PEKING MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION, PRO AND CON.

6. USIS. WE SEE NO PURPOSE IN ADDING A USIS OFFICER. CULTURAL AND PRESS RESPONSIBILITIES IN PEKING CAN BE HANDLED EFFECTIVELY BY THE POLITICAL SECTION.

7. ECONOMIC. WE FEEL IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO INCREASE FURTHER OUR ECONOMIC STAFF UNTIL WE HAVE ABSORBED THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER ARRIVING NEXT MONTH. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT LATER AN ADDITIONAL (FIFTH) ECONOMIC OFFICER, AT THE FSO-5 LEVEL, COULD BE PROFITABLY ABSORBED, GENERALLY IMPROVING OUR REPORTING, INCLUDING FIELD TRAVEL AND COVERAGE OF OTHER EMBASSIES, AND HELPING US TO MORE EFFECTIVELY SERVE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL VISITORS. IF SUCH AN OFFICER WERE ADDED SOME MONTHS HENCE, WE WOULD NOT RIGIDLY OPPOSE THE IDEA OF THIS OFFICER BEING FROM THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT, BUT WE WOULD PREFER, GIVEN THE NATURE OF USLO, THAT A FIFTH OFFICER BE FROM STATE. A SIXTH OFFICER IN THE ECONOMIC SECTION PROBABLY WOULD RESULT IN SOME REDUNDANCY WITH THE CONGEN'S FUNCTIONS AS WE CURRENTLY UNDERSTAND THEM.

8. HOUSING AND OFFICE SPACE. AT THE MOMENT, WE
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ANTICIPATE THAT THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER AND OTHERS WOULD HAVE TO SPEND SOME WEEK IN A HOTEL. WITH SOME INTERNAL RESHUFFLING OF OFFICES AND EMPLOYMENT OF PARTITIONS, WE CAN PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE SOMEWHAT CROWDED, BOT THE ONE ADDITIONAL POLITICAL OFFICER AS WELL AS THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER AND SECRETARY ALREADY SCHEDULED. WE ALSO ARE TENTATIVELY EXPLORING WITH THE CHINESE PLANS FOR PUTTING AN ADDITIONAL SMALL WING FOR TWO OFFICES IN THE COURTYARD WITHIN THE USLO OFFICE BUILDING. WE CURRENTLY WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME, I THINK, FINDING ASpace FOR ADDITIONAL OFFICERS. THE CHINESE WOULD NOT PERMIT US FREELY TO TEAR DOWN INTERNAL WALLS IN OUR BUILDING AND OTHERWSIE TO CARRY OQ A MAJOR RESTRUCTURING JOB.
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